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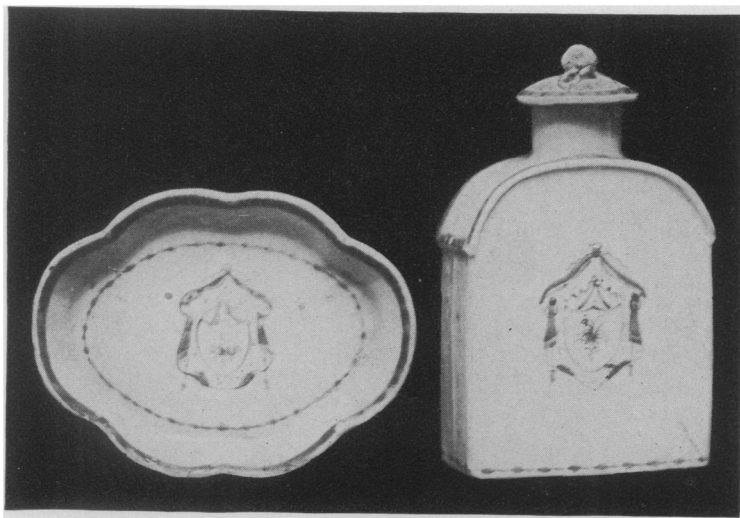
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WHAT IS LOWESTOFT CHINA?

It has been a much disputed question among ceramists whether what is commonly known as "Lowestoft" china was produced in the town of that name at the easternmost point of England, or in the Orient. Prominent students are found supporting each side of the question. Others claim that the ware was made in China and sent to England to be decorated.

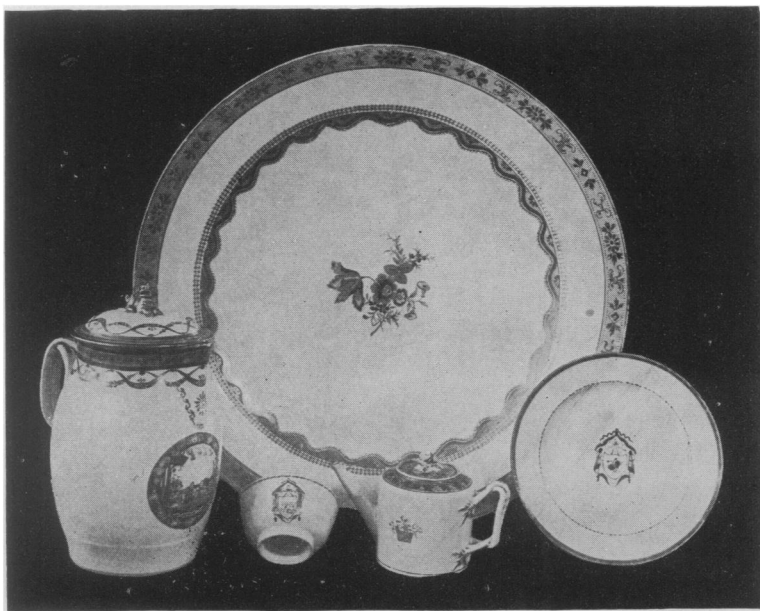
It is not deemed necessary here to quote from the various conflicting authorities on both sides. Those who take the ground that the ware generally known as "Lowestoft" is simply a variety of Chinese porcelain of a peculiar



ORIENTAL "LOWESTOFT." BLUE AND GOLD DECORATION, ON HARD PASTE
Pennsylvania Museum

style and character, have the consensus of opinion in their favor. There is certainly not the slightest basis for believing that any of the Oriental products which are so common here could have been made in England. Neither have we any proof whatever that the Chinese ware was ever painted in the English town. A prominent English writer, Mr. Owen, in his *Two Centuries of Ceramic Art in Bristol*, says, "There cannot be any doubt that hard porcelain, vitrified and translucent, was never manufactured from the raw materials, native kaolin and petunse, at any other locality in England than Plymouth and Bristol. The tradition that such ware was made at Lowestoft in 1775 * * rests upon evidence too slight to be worthy of argument. The East India Company imported into England large quantities of porcelain for sale. * * This particular ware, which is very plentiful even at the present day, and which has of late acquired the reputation of having been made at Lowestoft, was

simply, in form and ornamentation, a reproduction by the Chinese of English earthenware models. The Chinese do not use saucers, butter boats and numbers of other articles after the European fashion, and the agents in China were compelled to furnish a model for every piece of ware ordered. These models the Asiatic workmen have copied only too faithfully. The ill-drawn roses, the coarsely painted baskets of flowers, the rude borders of lines and dots, are literally copied from the inartistic painting on the English earthenware of by-gone days. There is a tradition that Oriental ware was imported in the white state, to be painted in England. Before giving belief to this speculation,



ORIENTAL "LOWESTOFT." BLUE AND POLYCHROME DECORATION
ON HARD PASTE
Boston Museum of Fine Arts

it will be necessary to consider how singular, nay, how impossible a circumstance it is, that if this unpainted china was imported in quantities sufficient to constitute a trade, none of it should have escaped into private custody free from that miserable defacement which has been miscalled decoration."

There are in many English collections numerous pieces of hard paste porcelain known as heraldic china decorated with armorial bearings, crests, etc., which are still known by the name "Lowestoft." These pieces in reality are of Chinese production, having been decorated to order in China from drawings, prints, or paintings furnished to the Oriental artist. A plate in this

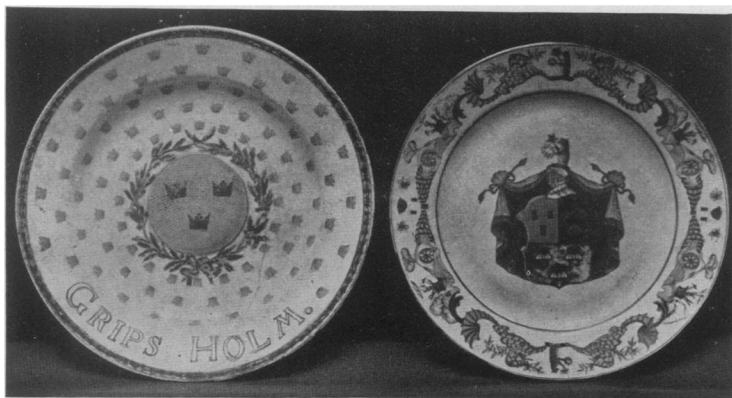
Museum is a genuine piece from a table service executed in China for the royal palace at Gripsholm, Sweden.

Until recently very little was known about true Lowestoft china. The Oriental "Lowestoft" fallacy was promulgated by William Chaffers, the author



ORIENTAL "LOWESTOFT." BROWN MONOCHROME DECORATION
ON HARD PASTE

of *Marks and Monograms*, and his erroneous conclusions were disseminated far and wide, so that many writers who followed him accepted them without question. In 1902, however, a remarkable discovery of pottery molds and a



ORIENTAL "LOWESTOFT"
Made for Royal Palace at
Gripsholm, Sweden

ORIENTAL "LOWESTOFT"
HERALDIC PLATE
Decorated in Enamel Colors

Pennsylvania Museum

large quantity of fragmentary china, in all stages of manufacture, was made on the site of the original china factory in the town of Lowestoft. By means of these molds and undoubted pieces of ware, the real character of the Lowe-

stoft paste, the decorative features of the ware and the forms of vessels made there, for the first time became known.

The Museum has recently come into possession of a little group of genuine English Lowestoft china, consisting of eleven pieces, some of which were found on the site of the old factory, while others have been fully identified by means of the molds and examples of the ware which have been discovered there. These pieces are, with a single exception, the only examples of true Lowestoft



GENUINE LOWESTOFT
Decorations in Blue on Soft Paste
Pennsylvania Museum



GENUINE LOWESTOFT
Decorations in Colors on Soft Paste
Imitation of Chinese (Central Cup) and Old Worcester Porcelain
Pennsylvania Museum

porcelain, so far as we know, at present on exhibition in public collections in this country.

There were at least three distinct varieties of ware made at the Lowestoft factory. The first variety is of a whitish paste, with a bluish tinge of the glaze, decorated with blue designs. In this blue and white ware the Worcester por-

celain was extensively imitated. One cup in the Museum collection is a poor copy of the Worcester "powder blue." Another is a blue transfer-printed pagoda design in close imitation of a Worcester pattern. The second variety, and perhaps the most characteristic, is of a deep cream-colored tint, on which Chinese designs in enamel colors were painted. The Worcester porcelain of the period was also imitated in this body.



GENUINE LOWESTOFT
Decorations in Colors on Soft Paste
Imitation of Old Worcester China
Pennsylvania Museum



GENUINE LOWESTOFT
Decorations in Enamel Colors
Chinese Style
Pennsylvania Museum

The third variety is evidently intended to imitate the Chinese so-called "Lowestoft" ware, as the glaze is tinted green to correspond with the Chinese product of the same character. This is a peculiar tint resembling a duck's egg, which when placed side by side with the cream-colored ware, is of a pronounced green color. On this ware Chinese designs and colors were copied. The little jug in the above illustration is a typical piece of true English Lowestoft. It is of the "duck's egg" green tint, imitating the greenish tone of some of the Chinese ware.

The study of these pieces clearly establishes the fact that the hard paste Chinese ware of this style, produced in the latter part of the eighteenth century at Ching-te-Chen, and decorated at Canton by Chinese artists for the European and American markets, was afterwards imitated at Lowestoft in the ordinary English soft paste body. The latter, however, is poorly potted and crudely decorated, and the marked peculiarities of the paste, differing materially from those of any other English porcelain, render it comparatively easy of identification.

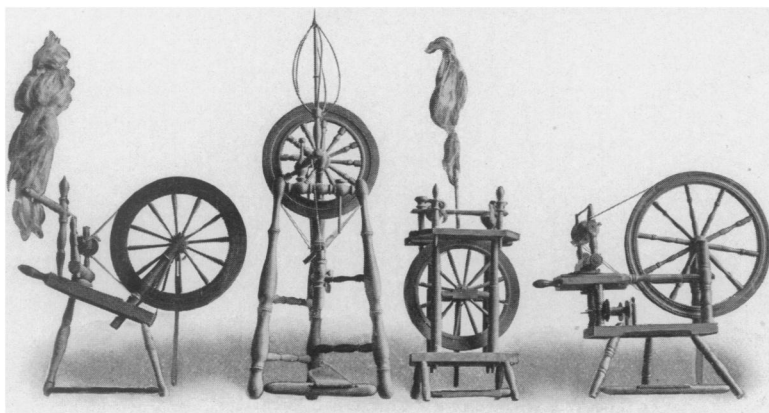
It may be safely assumed, therefore, that every piece of hard paste porcelain found in this country, which has heretofore been supposed to have been made at Lowestoft, is of Chinese origin, having been brought here either by sailing vessels directly from China, or shipped to Europe by the East India Company and brought to America by some voyager.

EDWIN A. BARBER.



COLONIAL RELICS

In the Frishmuth Collection of Colonial relics may be seen a most interesting series of reels and spinning wheels of various forms. The accompanying illustration shows four forms of eighteenth century wheels. The one shown on



VARIOUS FORMS OF SPINNING WHEELS
IN THE FRISHMUTH COLLECTION